UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN - ECLAC

Distr.
GENERAL

LC/G.1809(SES.25/16)
18 March 1994

ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

Twenty-fifth session
Cartagena, Colombia, 20-27 April 1994

COMMITTEE ON COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND REGIONS

ACTIVITIES OF THE ECLAC SYSTEM TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND REGIONS DURING THE 1992-1993 BIENNIUM

Note by the secretariat

94-2-227

CONTENTS

		Page
SUMMARY		1
I.	THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR TCDC: PROGRESS AT THE GLOBAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS DURING THE BIENNIUM	3
	1. The global framework	3
	2. The regional framework	4
	3. The ECLAC framework	6
II.	SOME STRATEGIC CRITERIA FOR INTRAREGIONAL TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN THE 1990s	7
	1. The new functions of the State	7
	2. The importance of the local dimension	8
	3. Social priorities	8
	4. Some relevant areas and sectors	8
	5. The role of the private sector	9
III.	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY ECLAC TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT TCDC IN THE REGION DURING THE 1992-1993 BIENNIUM	11
	1. The operational modalities of the ECLAC system for promoting and supporting TCDC	11
	2. Selective description of ECLAC projects that include elements of horizontal cooperation	11
	3. Selective description of activities to promote and support horizontal cooperation, by sector	13
IV.	GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT TCDC	17
	1. Strategic criteria	17
	2. Trends favourable to TCDC	17
	3. Follow-up activities	18

SUMMARY

Pursuant to the general guidelines for United Nations bodies set forth in the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, the ECLAC system —including the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) and the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE)— carries out a number of activities to promote and support technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) at the regional, subregional and interregional levels. More specifically, its actions comply with the mandates given to the secretariat by the countries members of ECLAC, whose institutional structure includes a Sessional Committee, established by ECLAC resolution 387(XVIII), that deals with matters concerning cooperation among developing countries and regions.

This report was prepared as a working document for submission to the Committee at the Commission's twenty-fifth session, which will take place in April 1994 at Cartagena, Colombia; it lists the main operational activities carried out by the ECLAC system since the last session.

The first part of the report presents an overview of the framework of inter-agency cooperation in which TCDC activities are currently implemented at the regional level and of the role played by ECLAC in that regard.

The second part discusses the strategy for cooperation in the 1990s, which was a major concern during the biennium in intergovernmental forums dealing with TCDC, especially (but not exclusively) in the context of the United Nations.

The third part reviews in more detail the activities carried out by the ECLAC system in 1992-1993 to promote and support TCDC, with emphasis on the most important projects and sectors. Also included is a study of the progress made with respect to coordination with the other organizations of the United Nations system and other regional agencies in the area of TCDC.

The last part of the report contains a brief proposal on possible guidelines for future action by the secretariat, which could be of interest for the work of the Committee.

I. THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR TCDC: PROGRESS AT THE GLOBAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS DURING THE BIENNIUM

Since the mid-1970s, the ECLAC system —including the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE) and the secretariat of the Commission itself— has carried out a wide range of activities to mobilize, from within, its own capacity to promote and support projects and initiatives in the area of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) throughout the region. The basic strategic purpose of this cooperation is to help the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean achieve their economic and social development goals. As a regional body of the United Nations, ECLAC is guided in its activities in this field by the resolutions adopted by Governments in the Organization's global and regional forums, and also by relevant guidelines issued by other regional forums and authorities. This arrangement constitutes an institutional framework that facilitates ongoing follow-up and progress in actions to promote and support TCDC at various levels. In recent years, the activities of the region's Governments have resulted in the establishment of an institutional structure for technical cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, which provides the necessary basis for consolidating TCDC as an increasingly important sphere of action for Governments and other relevant national agents. This part of the report summarizes the work accomplished and initiatives undertaken in this area during the biennium.

1. The global framework

The general framework for TCDC in the United Nations is the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, adopted by the General Assembly in 1978, under which the organizations of the system act as "catalysts" and promoters of TCDC, which is essentially initiated by the Governments themselves. In 1992-1993, the States Members of the Organization took actions and adopted agreements to enhance TCDC activities in the system on the following occasions:

Substantive session of the Economic and Social Council on technical cooperation as a modality in the projects implemented by the United Nations system. The topic of TCDC was discussed at this meeting, which took place from 29 June to 31 July 1992 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Council considered the report* of the Secretary-General on TCDC as a modality in the formulation, preparation, execution and evaluation of the projects implemented by the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields. In general, the report reviews the most important resolutions and decisions regarding TCDC, as well as the efforts made to strengthen it, and includes recommendations for intensifying the use of TCDC as a viable operational instrument.

---

* E/1992/75 of 17 June 1992.

Eighth Meeting of the High-level Committee on the Review of TCDC. This Committee, which meets in odd years, held its eighth meeting at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 28 to 31 May 1993. According to its usual practice, the Committee considered the progress made by United Nations organizations and by Governments in implementing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and the decisions of the High-level Committee itself. It also adopted decision 8/2, which establishes an overall framework for the promotion and application of TCDC in the 1990s; this decision represents the culmination of a process of debate and strategic analysis of TCDC begun at the previous meeting of the High-level Committee (decision 7/6 of 6 June 1991).

Meeting of the UNDP Governing Council. At its special session, held in February 1992 (DP/1992/7) to prepare for the fifth programming cycle, the Council took a decision on the amount of special programme resources to be allocated for the activities on technical cooperation among developing countries of the Special Unit for TCDC of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Council reviewed the four types of activities carried out in the fourth programming cycle: programming exercises; training sessions and workshops; support to ad hoc activities; and provision of data and information through the TCDC Information Referral System (INRES). The Council also discussed a strategy for the 1990s at the meeting. The main recommendations and resolutions formulated on the basis of this evaluation and in consultation with Governments of developing countries covered the following areas, in which specific agreements were reached: i) TCDC as a priority modality of supporting project execution; ii) the need for a coherent strategy to promote TCDC; iii) better integration of TCDC in national development activities carried out under programmes and activities of the United Nations system; iv) strengthening of training in TCDC programming exercises, impact studies and exchange of experiences; and v) expansion of the TCDC-INRES database on the capacity, quality and volume of information available in developing-country institutions.

2. The regional framework

The countries of the region members of the Latin American Economic System (SELA) have authorized that entity to act as regional focal point for activities in support of TCDC carried out by national focal points in charge of this area. In the performance of this function, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA convenes and organizes annual meetings of those focal points, which are based in national departments or agencies for international cooperation. Currently, these meetings constitute the most effective mechanism for exchanging information and ideas, reporting to the national focal points on the TCDC activities of the ECLAC system and hearing the views of the countries of the region with regard to priority sectors and issues. Moreover, the regular annual convening of these meetings has resulted in the establishment of an important system of feedback with technical entities that coordinate cooperation at the national level. During the 1992-1993 biennium, the seventh and eighth Meetings of Directors of International Technical Cooperation took place (Caracas, September 1992 and August 1993, respectively) in the context of the regular meetings of the Latin American Council of SELA. The ECLAC secretariat has participated regularly in these meetings to report on the Commission's activities to promote TCDC; it has also collaborated with the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and the UNDP Special Unit for TCDC, which has provided the countries with the necessary financial support.

Seventh Meeting of Directors of International Technical Cooperation. This meeting took place from 7 to 9 September 1992, at SELA headquarters in Caracas, in the context of preparations for the eighteenth regular meeting of the Latin American Council of SELA. The meeting included a workshop on national TCDC focal points; participants discussed regional guidelines and strategies for TCDC in the 1990s, considered the results of the Regional Meeting on Technical Cooperation among Countries (TCC) for Health Technology Development (Santiago, Chile, 6-10 July 1992) and evaluated the current status of the Information System of Regional Technical Cooperation for Computerization of Capacities and Needs for the Latin American and Caribbean Countries (INFOSELA) and INRES databases. Lastly, they were informed of the actions taken in the context of the Coordination Mechanism for Regional Bodies and Forums Engaged in TCDC Activities.

Eighth Meeting of Directors of International Technical Cooperation (Caracas, 24-26 August 1993). In addition to following up some issues raised at the preceding meeting, the participants considered two topics of special significance for strengthening technical cooperation in the region: i) analysis of the new global panorama and its influence on international technical cooperation, particularly TCDC; and ii) implementation of a regional TCDC strategy for the 1990s. Moreover, the participants gave the Permanent Secretariat of SELA a mandate to work with ECLAC in preparing a project proposal on promoting the exchange of experiences regarding active private-sector participation, in collaboration with the public sector, in TCDC initiatives.

Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC). This meeting was held at Caracas from 7 to 9 September 1992, pursuant to decision 319, article 5, of the Latin American Council of SELA, which called for the preparation of a regional TCDC programming exercise on international trade, with the coordinated participation of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), ECLAC, UNDP and SELA. The participants reviewed a proposal prepared by UNCTAD and ECLAC on TCDC activities in the area of external trade. They agreed to emphasize the issue of environmental measures and their impact on international trade in the countries of the region. To that end, the four organizations sponsored a Regional Seminar on Environmental Policies and Market Access, which took place at Bogotá on 19 and 20 October 1993. Although ECLAC was not represented at the meeting, it contributed a document on environmental restrictions and their effects on changing production patterns in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the regional framework for TCDC, progress was also made in the area of inter-agency relations through the Coordination Mechanism for Regional Bodies and Forums Engaged in TCDC Activities. This open, informal operational arrangement is based on the deliberations and agreements of national directors of international cooperation at their aforementioned annual meetings, and facilitates the identification of forms of coordination among various regional agencies to help implement the measures agreed upon by the countries at those meetings.

Three meetings of the Coordination Mechanism were held during the biennium. The seventh and eighth meetings were held in 1992 and 1993, respectively, following the Meetings of Directors of International Technical Cooperation. The eighth meeting was held at the headquarters of the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA) in April 1992, and was especially significant in that the participants analysed elements of a strategy for intraregional cooperation from the viewpoint of the participating agencies. ECLAC has supported the Coordination Mechanism since its establishment because it represents an effective way of avoiding duplication of effort and facilitating joint activities under projects designed to promote TCDC in specific sectors.

3. The ECLAC framework

The activities of the ECLAC system to promote and support TCDC at the regional, subregional and interregional levels are governed by the specific mandates given to the ECLAC secretariat by the States members of the Commission. Within the Commission's organic structure, matters related to TCDC are the responsibility of the Sessional Committee on cooperation among developing countries and regions, which was established at the eighteenth ECLAC session (La Paz, Bolivia, 1979) to examine the Commission's progress in implementing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. The Committee has met regularly since 1981; its work is reflected in ECLAC resolutions that specifically concern TCDC in the ECLAC system.

At the Commission's twenty-fourth session, held at Santiago, Chile, in 1992, the Committee adopted a draft resolution that was subsequently adopted in the plenary meeting as resolution 530 (XXIV) on cooperation among developing countries and regions. Its provisions, which guided the secretariat's activities during the biennium, concern the areas in which the ECLAC system can help to promote TCDC in the region. These areas include: support for national focal points for technical cooperation among developing countries and regions; incorporation of material related to the planning and execution of technical cooperation among developing countries into the training activities carried out by ECLAC; technical support for existing cooperation networks and systems in the region; dissemination of information on proposed projects and activities to be executed by the ECLAC system that could help to support and promote technical cooperation among developing countries; the use of operational modalities that permit, where appropriate, the participation of non-governmental agents of cooperation in both the social and productive sectors; collaboration with forums and mechanisms for coordinating the activities of bodies and organizations to support, promote and implement technical cooperation projects among developing countries in the region; and coordination with UNDP, SELA and other competent bodies in conducting regional programming exercises on technical cooperation among developing countries.

II. SOME STRATEGIC CRITERIA FOR INTRAREGIONAL TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN THE 1990S

The foregoing shows that the need for a strategy for international technical cooperation, and especially TCDC, in the 1990s was addressed in all of the forums that make up the institutional framework in this area. Two motives seem to have prompted this concern: i) the need to link technical cooperation to the main orientations and sectors of the countries' development policies, which should involve the formulation of explicit national policies on international technical cooperation, including, of course, TCDC; and ii) the need to adopt operational modalities through which resources can be effectively allocated for promoting horizontal cooperation activities, and which translate into rapid, timely procedures for matching the supply of cooperation with demand for it in developing countries.

In view of these concerns, ECLAC conducted a study on the potential of international technical cooperation, with emphasis on intraregional cooperation, from the strategic perspective of the proposal on changing production patterns with social equity as the linchpin of the region's development policies. The point of departure for this line of reasoning is the recognition of the new characteristics of the scenario for the region's development in the 1990s, as well as its effects on technical cooperation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The changes taking place in national institutions and the emergence of new actors in the field of cooperation are especially important in this regard. As noted earlier, ECLAC presented these views at a meeting of the Coordination Mechanism at Montevideo in April 1992. Below is a summary of the strategic criteria for cooperation that were analysed on that occasion.

1. The new functions of the State

One consideration is the reformulation of the State's role in the development process; this requires, on the one hand, a profound change in the dimensions of the State apparatus and, on the other, a substantial improvement in the State's capacity to regulate the changing of production patterns efficiently and to lead the way towards greater social equity. In practice, the process of State reform is prompted by the need to adjust institutional arrangements to cover the many new development issues that are emerging on the international scene. A case in point is the implementation of economic adjustment policies in the region, considering their social implications and the political factors that condition them. Another example of a similar nature is the question of how to meet the challenges of international competitiveness, given the fact that the region's economies are exporters of raw materials. The issue of environmental sustainability emerges as both a hindrance and a stimulus for the progress and development of production systems, and will therefore require considerable efforts to reach consensus on how to harmonize these two perspectives. The need to include specific social groups, such as young people and ethnic minorities, as well as the gender dimension, in the various facets of social life also makes new institutional demands on the State, especially with regard to the best and most viable approach to processes and mechanisms of positive

discrimination, which form the basis of policies to meet these needs. Intraregional cooperation can provide valuable support for the implementation of this varied institutional agenda, in so far as exchanges can be intensified in areas directly related to these kinds of State reform.

2. The importance of the local dimension

Another emerging characteristic that is coming to the forefront of public policy is the increased importance of local governments. At the institutional level, this means adopting policies to decentralize political systems and to target social investment more precisely. In this regard, the actions of public and private agents are placing a marked and persistent emphasis on the local dimension. This means that all agents of development, not just the State, should initiate a dialogue with a wide range of local actors that legitimately perceive development problems from a micro-social perspective that usually is not even detected by the vast majority of government entities, which operate in traditionally centralist systems; this experience has predominated in the region, even in countries with federal political constitutions. Concretely, this means that the actions of a State in the process of reform must consider incorporating local communities in all phases of the design, execution, follow-up and evaluation of government policies, and at all levels of the State system.

3. Social priorities

Lastly, the fourth strategic criterion that should orient TCDC policies is the fuller incorporation of social programmes as a priority area for intraregional cooperation. In practice, this involves making TCDC an increasingly effective instrument for contributing to the anti-poverty effort, which appears to be an endemic feature of development experiences in the region. Of course, this new dimension of TCDC should reflect the imperatives of the other strategic criteria mentioned above; specifically, it should incorporate social groups living in poverty as agents of cooperation. The aim is not to use cooperation as a form of welfare, but rather to design cooperation policies that allow poor sectors and groups to get involved in anti-poverty initiatives.

4. Some relevant areas and sectors

An analysis of the ECLAC documents that define the proposal on changing production patterns with social equity reveals certain areas that are relevant to cooperation, in strategic sectors to which the above-mentioned criteria should be applied on a priority basis.

In the field of economic policy, areas for cooperation include: i) aspects of fiscal policy, modernization of tax systems, investment systems and public policies; ii) negotiation of agreements on tariff and para-tariff policies, preferential integration areas and streamlining of border formalities; iii) transfer of technology, standardization of technical norms and generation of endogenous centres of technological innovation; iv) policies, programmes and projects to support micro-enterprises, including training, identification of markets and financing; v) modernization of the industrial sector, evaluation of the environmental impact of its processes, spatial deconcentration of its activities, etc.; vi) modernization of small- and medium-scale agriculture, including irrigation projects, exchange of cultivation techniques and agricultural price policies; vii) basic support services for productive linkages, including agreements on the use of energy, communications and transport systems, port administration and modernization and

financial services; and viii) in the institutional sphere, cooperation for the exchange of experiences in regional and local planning, interlinkage of decision-making processes and modernization of management systems.

In the natural resources sector, the following areas are of special interest for strengthening and intensifying TCDC: i) formulation of policy proposals (including their mechanisms and financing) on the exploitation, management and conservation of resources; ii) exchange of experiences in dealing with the problem of pollution, with special emphasis on technical standards of control, clean technologies, training and research programmes and regulation of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes; iii) design and development of environmental indicators and information systems; and iv) issues related to biodiversity and biotechnology, such as the regulation and control of the use of genetic resources, especially through the design of legal instruments to regulate the marketing of species and derivatives.

In the social field, areas relevant to cooperation can be identified in the education, housing and health sectors. In the first sector, these areas include improvement of the quality of education at the basic, secondary and higher levels; experiences with innovative teaching methods that link educational processes more closely to the requirements of production sectors; institutional reforms; and experiences in local administration and financing of education services. With regard to housing, countries can cooperate in the areas of institutional policies and revival of the housing sector; financing for housing, with special emphasis on low-cost housing; and policies for the management of housing and human settlements. Lastly, the health sector offers opportunities for cooperation in research on health issues, exchange of experiences with training programmes, occupational health and urban health; absorption of technology in the sector; health information systems; and marketing in the health sector.

5. The role of the private sector

Another point that should be emphasized is the importance of the private sector in the process of economic and social modernization, in both the sphere of business per se and that of non-governmental organizations. This means that these agents must be given opportunities to take action and initiatives and to become organically incorporated into cooperation processes, according to each country's characteristics. In particular, the private sector's potential contribution to cooperation activities should be re-evaluated, mainly with respect to the transfer of business administration and management techniques. One especially relevant consideration in this regard is the possibility of transferring these techniques and methods from the private sector to the public sector. In some specific cases, the effects of processes of this kind are already apparent, inter alia in the form of project banks and social investment funds and systems.

The issue of the State's linkage with the private sector is of special interest in relation to this strategic dimension. Their interaction is not confined to areas directly related to the business sector, such as the establishment of agencies to promote exports and develop markets, modalities for supporting and protecting national products, institution-building and manpower training plans and programmes. In fact, the linkage between the two sectors is becoming highly dynamic in other fields, such as wage negotiations, worker benefits, housing services and health care.

The exchange of experiences with different forms of linkage between the State and the private sector is a suitable area for cooperation among the countries of the region. Some Governments have already set up and are operating a wide variety of mechanisms to provide incentives for private enterprise, which could serve as a reference for other initiatives undertaken for the same purpose. ECLAC has addressed these topics by preparing, in collaboration with the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, a project profile that was submitted to the Eighth Meeting of Directors of International Technical Cooperation, held at Caracas in August 1993. The Commission then began taking steps to obtain financing and proceed to the execution phase of the project.

The draft project proposes that case studies be conducted of selected sectors in countries of the region, with a view to analysing concrete experiences with national policies and institutional modalities of linkage between the State and the private sector, in order to promote the exchange of information on these experiences and horizontal cooperation initiatives for the application of those which have proved most effective. So-called triangular cooperation, with the participation of developed countries, is also envisaged. The project would have the following objectives: i) to increase awareness, among government policy administrators, of existing mechanisms of linkage between the State and private sectors in the countries of the region; ii) to lay the foundations for a network of cooperation among those national mechanisms and to determine, along with specialized and regional agencies, how to provide the necessary technical support for the establishment of such a network; iii) to promote the formulation of cooperation agreements between public and private agents, using modalities that are consistent with each country's regulations; and iv) to promote joint actions, at either the regional or subregional level, for the conduct of future activities and projects to strengthen TCDC in the area of linkage between the public and private sectors.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY ECLAC TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT TCDC IN THE REGION DURING THE 1992-1993 BIENNIUM

1. The operational modalities of the ECLAC system for promoting and supporting TCDC

ECLAC uses a variety of operational modalities to promote TCDC, depending on each specific case. The main modalities include: i) providing information services, preferably through the Latin American Centre for Economic and Social Documentation (CLADES), which forms part of the ECLAC system; ii) including elements of horizontal cooperation in the secretariat's technical and substantive studies, in order to identify opportunities for cooperation and possible ways of strengthening TCDC among the countries of the region; iii) preparing specific projects that emphasize TCDC, and mobilizing extrabudgetary financial resources for their execution; iv) providing technical support for TCDC networks made up of operational agents of cooperation, many of which are private entities in the sector concerned; v) coordinating with regional organizations that also use TCDC modalities in their respective spheres of action, especially through the coordination mechanisms operating in the region with the support of UNDP and SELA; and vi) consulting and coordinating with the other regional commissions with a view to launching joint initiatives to promote TCDC in sectors of common interest, at the interregional level.

2. Selective description of ECLAC projects that include elements of horizontal cooperation

In each of its initiatives in this area, the ECLAC system uses one or more of the aforementioned modalities to promote and support TCDC in the context of its work programme. In general, activities of this type come under specific technical cooperation projects implemented with extrabudgetary resources provided by various agencies, which may or may not belong to the United Nations system. A significant proportion of these extrabudgetary projects emphasizing TCDC are supported by developed countries members of the Commission.

The TCDC components included in these projects are intended to meet one or more of the following specific objectives: to strengthen national institutions in the sector concerned; to establish cooperation networks and support their operation; to provide assistance to information systems to improve the dissemination of the demand for and supply of technical cooperation among countries; to strengthen national TCDC focal points; to organize seminars and technical meetings for the exchange of experiences of interest to the countries; and to prepare studies and reports specifically aimed at identifying opportunities for cooperation. Below are summaries of the most relevant projects being executed in the 1992-1993 biennium, indicating each project's identification code, title, specific objectives, amount of extrabudgetary resources and duration:

CAN/91/S43, Caribbean computer-based communications development project. Objectives: To facilitate and expand the use of computerized telematic techniques by various user groups; to promote greater use of databases and information systems; and to improve the flow of information for the economic and social development of the Caribbean countries (US$ 247,260, January 1990-February 1994).

CAN/92/S16, Network of Networks. Executed by the Latin American Association of Development Financing Institutions (ALIDE). Objectives: To improve user access to existing information resources in regional information networks and systems, and to increase their use through an integrated approach to supporting the networks. ECLAC, as associate executing agency, participates in the project through CLADES, which is in charge of the training module on integrated network management (US$ 81,435, August 1992-August 1995).

CAN/93/S55, REDATAM-GIS generic population-related applications. Objectives: To facilitate the interconnection of REDATAM-Plus software (Retrieval of data for small areas by microcomputer) with commercial generic information services on population, with a view to analysing scenarios for decision-making at the local level. The project will improve support services for the REDATAM user network, which is organized and maintained by CELADE (US$ 227,833, June 1993-November 1993).

FRA/93/S55, Seminar on productive complementation among the countries members of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) (US$ 24,700, November 1993).

FRG/88/S21, The impacts of subsidies and different systems of control and organization on urban public transport systems in Latin America. Comparative analysis of the productivity, costs and rates of urban transport systems in countries with different models of organization and intervention by public authorities. The study includes proposals and recommendations based on the exchange of national experiences in the area of urban transport (US$ 225,841, March 1989-December 1993).

FRG/91/S72, Technical cooperation for enhancing the petroleum subsector in Central America (phase IV). Objectives: To strengthen subregional and national institutions in the energy sector, improve databases and train specialists in the provision, planning and consumption of petroleum supplies in national energy systems (US$ 73,664, January 1991-August 1993).

FRG/92/S06, Guidelines and consultancy services on controlled environmentally sound waste management. Objectives: To identify and exchange national experiences in formulating and applying policies to manage and control urban and industrial pollution (US$ 637,500, October 1992-April 1994).

FRG/92/S25, Technical cooperation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the field of road maintenance, phase II. Objectives: To reduce the costs of land transport by promoting the appropriate allocation of funds for maintaining road infrastructure; to prevent the accelerated and costly deterioration of road infrastructure in the countries of the region (US$ 232,837, September 1992-September 1993).

FRG/92/S56, Restructuring and privatization of railways in Latin America. The purpose of this project is to bring together officials in charge of privatization programmes in Latin American countries to consider regional experiences in that area, identify common problems and propose possible solutions. Foreign experts also participate in these activities (US$ 67,674, February 1992-April 1993).

ITA/89/S87, Strengthening international cooperation to Central America, the Caribbean and selected countries of South America. Objectives: To identify and prepare national or subregional technical cooperation and investment projects, and to train national personnel in the formulation of such projects (US$ 1,374,850, July 1989-January 1994).

NGO/92/S01, Management options for a shared stock: the Peruvian and Chilean pelagic fisheries. Objectives: To identify, design and assess alternatives for joint management of a shared stock of fish resources; to make quantitative and qualitative estimates of the potential benefits of the options considered, with the participation of sectoral experts in the government and private sectors of the participating countries (US$ 50,000, August 1992-July 1993).

RLA/88/039, Design of policies to strengthen the capacity for technological innovation and enhance international competitiveness in the Latin American entrepreneurial environment. Objectives: To develop instruments for designing policies, actions and institutional mechanisms aimed at strengthening the technological capacity and enhancing the competitiveness of export firms and import-substituting manufacturing firms; to design programmes of action for industrial subsectors; to offer proposals for improving the effectiveness of national policies and institutions that support technological innovation and the marketing of manufactured products; to train national technicians; to organize national and sectoral working groups (US$ 774,801, February 1989-June 1994).

UNP/93/S01, Application of economic policy instruments for environmental management and sustainable development in selected Latin American and Caribbean countries. Objectives: To establish programmes to strengthen national institutions, to prepare national reports and analyse sectoral cases and to implement a programme of horizontal cooperation among the participating countries (US$ 426,000, approved in September 1993).

3. Selective description of activities to promote and support horizontal cooperation, by sector

The ECLAC system also carries out activities to promote and support TCDC in specific sectors; some of the projects mentioned above may become catalysts for the intensification and consolidation of technical cooperation in these sectors among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Investment programming and operation of project banks. Under the IDB-funded programme of technical cooperation among countries (CT/INTRA), ECLAC and ILPES have promoted various activities to continue to strengthen the exchange of experiences and horizontal cooperation among the countries of the region in the areas of investment programming, the project cycle and project banks. These activities include: i) a visit by two officials of the Dominican Republic's National Planning Office to Bogotá and Santa Marta from 2 to 16 August 1992, to study the process of institutionalizing and decentralizing Colombia's National Investment Projects Bank (BPIN); ii) a visit by two officials of Venezuela's Central Office for Planning and Coordination (CORDIPLAN) to Colombia from 7 to 11

September 1992 to learn about BPIN under a framework agreement on technical and economic cooperation between Colombia and Venezuela; iii) a visit by a representative of the Government of Brazil to Colombia in October 1992 to observe the results of BPIN.

Housing and urban development. ECLAC provided support for the convening of the Regional Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean, which took place at Santiago, Chile, from 16 to 20 March 1992. The meeting was sponsored by ECLAC, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development of Chile, UNDP, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Participating in the meeting were representatives of 23 countries members of the Commission and three associate members, as well as various non-governmental organizations in the region that deal with the issue of housing. The government delegates adopted the Santiago Declaration, by which they agreed, inter alia, "to establish an advisory and coordinating body among the ministers and high-level authorities of the housing and urban development sector in Latin America and the Caribbean" and "to hold top-level meetings every two years, with the aim of analysing the main topics affecting housing development", for which "the host country of the current meeting" would act as interim secretariat, "with the support of ECLAC as technical secretariat". In the Declaration, the ECLAC secretariat is also requested to "strengthen its coordinating role in this area" for the different organizations of the United Nations system in the region.

Investment programmes in Central America. Under the IDB/CABEI/ ECLAC project on an investments programming strategy for Central America, the Second Meeting of Producers of Edible Fats and Oils was held at Guatemala City on 14 and 15 November 1991. The participants formulated the following considerations to underscore the strategic importance of this production sector: i) edible fats and oils are an important component of the basic diet of the Central American population; ii) the subregion enjoys clear comparative advantages in the production and processing of oilseeds; and iii) the fact that regional production of oils and fats is insufficient to supply the internal market opens up considerable export opportunities in the sector. The investment programming strategy for this branch of production supports the process of trade liberalization and increased international competitiveness; identifies conditions for achieving that objective (i.e., availability of credit and appropriate conditions for access thereto); seeks to reform and modernize the financial system and to reformulate exogenous costs (tariffs on inputs, taxes, costs and quality of infrastructure, etc.); and recommends the formation of business associations within the sector. The participants at the meeting agreed to set up an organizing committee to establish the Central American Association of Edible Fats and Oils Industries, in which all the countries of the subregion would be represented.

Production of capital goods. The objectives of the ECLAC/UNDP/ Latin American Association of Capital Goods Industries (ALABIC) Regional Programme for the Strengthening and Development of the Capital Goods Industry (RLA/89/001) are to spread awareness and promote closer linkage among agents in the sector (manufacturing and purchasing firms, investors and engineering and service firms) and to analyse and elaborate proposals on technological management, marketing and quality in regional firms in order to enhance their competitiveness and improve their market position. To achieve those objectives, the programme contemplates the following activities: establishing Focal Points for the Demand for Capital Goods (CADEs) in each of the participating countries; evaluating the conditions required for the self-sustaining, permanent operation of an information network supplied by the CADEs, whose purpose would be to monitor purchasing programmes and public and private investment projects, their specifications, financing schemes, programmes of execution and associated demands; publishing a schematic catalogue on the productive capacity of the main manufacturers in each of the LAIA countries,

classified according to type of user; and analysing, on the basis of case studies, the bidding procedures and conditions applied in the region and financing schemes to which regional firms can gain access.

The programme's activities also include the formulation of proposals and recommendations, the study of standards, evaluations of firms in the region and preparation of technical documents on the subject in question. The first phase of the programme focused on designing a regional catalogue, by branch of industry, of the main manufacturers of capital goods to order in the countries of the region, and defining its specifications and coverage; the catalogue included only those firms that account for at least 70% of supply in each branch of production.

Information and communications systems. Under the technical cooperation project to establish a region-wide Network of Networks in Latin America, which receives financial support from Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), ECLAC signed a cooperation agreement with the Latin American Association of Development Financing Institutions (ALIDE), the executing agency for the project. As an associate agency, ECLAC (through CLADES) implements the training component, whose aim is to promote horizontal cooperation in the field of information for development. The project supports 18 regional networks (14 information networks, three research networks and one telecommunications network) by providing various services to managers of networks and of selected national centres, end users and information professionals both in and outside Latin America. Also participating as associate agencies are the Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Information Centre (BIREME), the Centre for Educational Research and Development (CIDE/REDUC) and the Brazilian Institute of Social and Economic Analysis (IBASE/ALTERNEX).

Technological development in the health field. The Regional Meeting on Technical Cooperation among Countries (TCC) for Health Technology Development, convened under the Convergence Project of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), was held at Santiago, Chile, from 6 to 10 July 1992. Participating in the meeting were representatives of ministries of health, national TCDC focal points, academic centres and private-sector health technology institutions. Eight regional projects, 56 subregional projects and 384 bilateral agreements in various technological fields were identified. To implement the agreements reached, the sponsoring agencies of the event resolved to set up an inter-agency committee on technical cooperation for health technology development, consisting of SELA, UNDP, PAHO/WHO, ECLAC and UNESCO, to support and coordinate the follow-up of the Convergence Project.

Dissemination of information. ECLAC continues to publish the newsletter Cooperation and Development, which is the Commission's regular organ for reporting on its activities in support of TCDC. The newsletter has been published without interruption since 1981 in English and Spanish, and is currently issued three times a year. Issues 35 to 40 were published during the biennium, and issue 41 is currently being prepared. The newsletter is the most systematically issued publication on TCDC in the United Nations system.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT TCDC

1. Strategic criteria

The 1990s began in a profoundly changed international environment which, in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, presents specific features that are clearly defined in the strategy for changing production patterns with social equity, as noted earlier. These changes have created a need to update and revamp the guiding criteria of the intraregional cooperation strategy, to reflect the new setting for regional development. In the Commission's view, TCDC has a significant role to play in enabling countries to take advantage of opportunities for cooperation on key aspects of the proposal on changing production patterns with social equity, such as the absorption and transfer of technology, the development of new markets, the exchange of innovative experiences in educational systems, trade negotiations with economic blocs and enhancement of international competitiveness in general.

The proposal on changing production patterns with social equity also highlights the need to incorporate new and emerging perspectives into the strategic criteria for strengthening intraregional cooperation in the Commission's future activities. In sum, those criteria are: i) reformulation of the State's role in the development process, including the modernization of public-sector structures and better management of public services; ii) recognition of the importance of local governments in public policy, which involves strengthening the decentralization process; iii) integration of the private sector, in both its business and non-governmental organization dimensions, in view of its relevance to the economic and social modernization process; and iv) inclusion of the broad spectrum of social programmes as a priority area for intraregional cooperation.

2. Trends favourable to TCDC

Certain trends that emerge from the region's accumulated experience with technical cooperation among developing countries could help to broaden the horizon for TCDC in the region. The future work of ECLAC should help to strengthen and consolidate those trends, which may be summed up as follows:

i) Regional TCDC programming exercises. This is an innovative modality that not only increases the potential for exchange between two or more developing countries, but also concentrates it in areas where the capacities, priorities and interests of the participating countries and national institutions markedly converge. This new modality consists of holding regional exercises to programme the exchange of experiences and the negotiation of TCDC agreements in specific areas, and has been widely supported by the countries, regional organizations and financing entities and important private-sector agents.

ii) Needs-assessment missions, which fall into two categories. The first consists of exploratory missions, whose purpose is to make an initial estimate of demand for TCDC, which is then further defined and studied. In cases where the transfer of technology is required, these missions constitute a form of technical support to the requesting country, since they make it possible to determine the content of the request more precisely. The second type are TCDC needs-assessment missions, which are part of a different strategy. These missions are carried out by countries that give priority to TCDC as an instrument of development policy and can allocate special resources for that purpose.

iii) Intraregional technical cooperation networks. The emergence and consolidation of cooperation networks in the region represents an important investment for the future of TCDC. The networks provide an opportunity for direct contact among the countries' technical entities, in their respective sectors, and allow for great flexibility of action. They offer a channel for participation at the technical level, stimulate the transfer of information and may become very expeditious means of exchange and cooperation. With all of these advantages, the networks may come to participate much more actively in TCDC at the regional level, together with the countries' official entities. The networks are a prototype of direct action in the area of horizontal cooperation.

iv) Specialized TCDC units in national institutions. Today, institutions and sectoral bodies that participate actively in technical cooperation often establish units in charge of coordinating TCDC. This practice not only facilitates the institution's work, but also simplifies that of the national focal points. The new interest in setting up these units reflects the importance which sectoral institutions attach to TCDC as an instrument for their own technical strengthening. These initiatives have been especially vigorous in countries that have made relatively more progress in consolidating their TCDC focal points.

v) Fuller use of information. There is a clear trend towards greater appreciation of the importance of selective information and more realistic attitudes with respect to its true potential and effects in terms of leading to concrete, timely cooperation initiatives. An important step forward in this regard has been the design, establishment and operation of project banks to rationalize public investment. These information systems have aroused considerable interest owing to their low cost and to recent advances in microcomputer software applications. From the viewpoint of horizontal cooperation, these project banks open up interesting prospects, to the extent that projects executed using TCDC modalities can be incorporated into their design and operation.

3. Follow-up activities

The Commission's operational activities to promote and support TCDC should also focus on continuing and strengthening certain activities and work methods that have proved effective, such as:

i) The growing use of extrabudgetary resources for activities to promote and support TCDC, in order to avoid the repercussions of allocating resources from the Organization's regular budget.

ii) The active participation of ECLAC in regional coordination initiatives to maximize the results achieved in this area by the various participating agencies, whether or not they belong to the United Nations system.

iii) Collaboration with and support for national TCDC focal points, which are primary actors in this area, at the request of the region's Governments.

iv) Support for regional TCDC programming initiatives by the countries in sectors which their Governments consider priorities for economic and social development, in coordination with UNDP and other competent regional bodies.

v) Assistance for regional and subregional cooperation networks, especially in fields of action where the specific participation of public and private agents is essential to the success of the initiatives undertaken.

vi) Continued dissemination of information on the projects implemented by the ECLAC system that show clear potential for supporting and promoting TCDC.

vii) Strengthening of activities that most clearly identify TCDC as an instrument for meeting the needs of specific population groups in relevant areas that are within the Commission's sphere of action, such as broadening young people's opportunities for access to technical training, and women's integration in development.